

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

In the Matter of: *
*
Major Marine Accident - *
Collision of the Japanese *
Fisheries Training Vessel *
EHIME MARU and the U.S. Navy *
Nuclear Attack Submarine USS *
GREENVILLE *

Friday,
February 16, 2001

INTERVIEW OF:

HELEN CULLEN

PRESENT: DONALD J. TYRRELL, Chief, Major
Investigation Division, Office of Marine Safety,
National Transportation Safety Board

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MR. TYRRELL: Today is February 17th, the
3 time is 8:10 a.m. And I am talking to Miss Helen
4 Cullen.

5 Ms. Cullen, can you start with when you
6 arrived at the Submarine Base in Pearl Harbor. And
7 what happened and where you went?

8 MS. CULLEN: I guess, I think that
9 (inaudible) about 5:30 and then we went, we had a
10 few people that weren't -- at McDonalds and from
11 there we went to the submarine base. And we had to
12 wait for (inaudible) And we weren't looking at the
13 time because it was so early.

14 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

15 MS. CULLEN: Then we went to -- over by the
16 silver square (inaudible) and --

17 MR. TYRRELL: Did anyone give you any kind
18 of a presentation before you went aboard the
19 submarine?

20 MS. CULLEN: Presentation as?

21 MR. TYRRELL: Any kind of instructions, any
22 kind of --

23 MS. CULLEN: We signed waivers. I signed a
24 waiver -- emergency contact, and (inaudible) As far

1 as what we were doing on the submarine that day, you
2 know, (Inaudible) on how to board the submarine,
3 you know, ask the Captain (inaudible) permission.
4 And you know, how, the protocol for (inaudible) the
5 officers (inaudible)

6 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. About, after you were
7 given those presentations, were you then taken
8 aboard the submarine?

9 MS. CULLEN: We were met by -- by, there
10 were, well, there were three officers from the
11 submarine, and I don't believe Scott was one of the
12 first ones, but it was his second in command and
13 then it was (inaudible) and also Bob Brubaker, and
14 (inaudible) They kind of (inaudible) two and they
15 told us that (inaudible) The submarine (inaudible)

16 MR. TYRRELL: About what time was it that
17 you actually went onboard the submarine?

18 MS. CULLEN: It was probably sometime 7:30,
19 probably not as late as eight o'clock.

20 MR. TYRRELL: Did you walk up a gangway from
21 the dock?

22 MS. CULLEN: Yes, we walked across the plank
23 and straight onto the --

24 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. When you got aboard

1 the submarine, what was the first thing that you
2 did?

3 MS. CULLEN: (inaudible) the crews mess and
4 at that time, we sat down and they offered us coffee
5 and donuts. And, they have, they talked to us more,
6 they introduced the different (inaudible) that day.

7 The crew, what their jobs were. What we would see,
8 where we weren't allowed to go. You know, at that
9 point, Scott asked us to stay with the crew, talk
10 with them. They wanted, they wanted us to be part
11 of it, and (inaudible) what they said. (Inaudible)

12 MR. TYRRELL: And after the crews mess, what
13 was the next thing you did?

14 MS. CULLEN: At that point, they put, we
15 were asked to put on life jackets and they gave us
16 paperwork as far as information on the boat, a
17 packet. And they said they would take us groups,
18 you know, the group was too large, and they would
19 split us up, but we would all see the same things,
20 but at different times.

21 MR. TYRRELL: I see.

22 MS. CULLEN: And we would all be, I guess,
23 (inaudible) out of the immediate harbor, and then
24 take us to, go up the bridge (inaudible) to the

1 conning tower.

2 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. And so you were out on
3 deck and the submarine was operating on the surface
4 at that time, I take it.

5 MS. CULLEN: Yes, because, yeah, we were all
6 on the deck. There were, you know, we could all go
7 out.

8 MR. TYRRELL: The whole, the whole group.

9 MS. CULLEN: Yeah.

10 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. What, did you recall
11 what the weather conditions were like?

12 MS. CULLEN: It was as far as very
13 overcast--

14 MR. TYRRELL: Were the seas --

15 MS. CULLEN: Well, this was when we were
16 still in the harbor. We were not, when we were, you
17 know, I don't know the difference degrees of, I
18 mean, we were actually on, sort of on the conning
19 tower, we were on the deck of the submarine.

20 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. All right. And you
21 went from there to the conning tower?

22 MS. CULLEN: Well, we went from there back
23 down into the submarine.

24 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

1 MS. CULLEN: And then he started two by
2 two(inaudible) of the con tower.

3 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

4 MS. CULLEN: So, I guess, you know, at that
5 point we were (inaudible) under water.

6 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. And then what happened
7 next after you left the conning tower?

8 MS. CULLEN: We were the last group to go up
9 to the con tower, because he told us that, you know,
10 it would be a little rougher, and he wanted to
11 (inaudible) he asked, you know, (inaudible)

12 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

13 MS. CULLEN: But, (inaudible) motion
14 sickness and the later he waited, the rougher it
15 got, because it was going further out to sea. The
16 last group, and at that point they took us to the
17 stateroom, you know, he also kind of explained, you
18 know, with the women aboard, that and we were asked
19 to ask questions. And you know, some of our
20 questions were answered and we were also told, you
21 know, (inaudible) you know, don't take it
22 personally, there were some things, you know, we
23 weren't allowed to answer(inaudible). But, they
24 explained, you know, about, one of the questions

1 was, you know, why (inaudible). But, in a sense,
2 you know, I think they wanted to us to experience
3 it, and then, get their perspective and then
4 (inaudible) But, the Captain turned over his head
5 to the women, so that, you know, to make it simpler
6 for everybody.

7 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

8 MS. CULLEN: So, when we got ready to go up
9 to the con tower, they harnessed us into the
10 Captain's --

11 MR. TYRRELL: They harnessed you into, in
12 his stateroom?

13 MS. CULLEN: They harnessed us, they put the
14 harnesses on us in his stateroom.

15 MR. TYRRELL: Oh, okay.

16 MS. CULLEN: And then we went up to the
17 conning tower.

18 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Okay. And about how
19 long were you in the conning tower?

20 MS. CULLEN: We were there probably for
21 about 20 minutes.

22 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. And what happened
23 next?

24 MS. CULLEN: From there, we went back down

1 to the crews mess and -- at that point I think we
2 prepared, we did, we prepared to dive.

3 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

4 MS. CULLEN: And each person on the bridge
5 gave us a position --

6 MR. TYRRELL: This is, you say you were in
7 the crews mess?

8 MS. CULLEN: We were in the crews mess. We
9 went from the crews mess, they were kind of showing
10 us around, and they kind of took us in groups, the
11 sonar, kind of where, they kind of showed us the, we
12 didn't really go into where the bunk rooms were, we
13 kind of knew where they were, but it was, you know,
14 (inaudible) sonar and showed us how it worked, you
15 know, and how to play, not play, but how to turn the
16 dials to the different frequencies. And how to
17 freeze the frequencies and (inaudible)

18 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

19 MS. CULLEN: They took us through, they
20 showed up where the communications were done. We
21 were told where the reactor was. Kind of gave us an
22 overlaying layout of where everything was.

23 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. And you said that they
24 were, at some point they started to prepare to

1 submerge.

2 MS. CULLEN: So, then we prepared to
3 submerge. They kind of gave us each different
4 positions. I think, I spent most of my time, well,
5 when we dove, I was at the periscope. I was the
6 navigator.

7 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

8 MS. CULLEN: So, I -- They told me exactly,
9 you know, where to (inaudible), looking through the
10 periscope, and looking, you know, they told me what
11 I would see, and at that time what to do, coming
12 into the bridge.

13 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

14 MS. CULLEN: And from there, throughout, you
15 know, I don't know who was at which position,
16 because there was somebody, the navigator was, you
17 know, right behind me.

18 MR. TYRRELL: How many periscopes did they
19 have?

20 MS. CULLEN: There were two periscopes
21 onboard. So, we, when we just went to dove, there
22 was only one.

23 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. So you were the only
24 person on a periscope during the dive.

1 MS. CULLEN: During the dive, yes.

2 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. What types of things
3 did they tell you to yell?

4 MS. CULLEN: Aft, fore and aft venting
5 (inaudible) and they told me to, he explained to me,
6 he said, you know, when we start to dive, you are
7 going to see the water in there, and there will be a
8 lot of bubbles and that means that, you know, the
9 (inaudible) is lifting, you know, yell it and yell
10 it loud. And then whoever, I am not sure what the
11 other procedures are, who does what after that.

12 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

13 MS. CULLEN: But, that was (inaudible)

14 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Okay. Did you have
15 your head in the periscope throughout the entire
16 dive?

17 MS. CULLEN: No, he would switch off with
18 me.

19 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

20 MS. CULLEN: I mean, it is kind of like he
21 set it up to, you know, what I would be looking at,
22 and then I had to swing around to, for, to look at
23 the back.

24 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. And did you do a

1 complete 360 degree turn or did you just go back in
2 the 180.

3 MS. CULLEN: It was 180.

4 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

5 MS. CULLEN: You know, because from the
6 forward, he set it up with forward, and then helped
7 move me around.

8 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

9 MS. CULLEN: To look at the back. And then
10 when I saw the same thing, you know, I don't
11 remember what the exact words are, but it was the
12 same, you know, bough --

13 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Do you remember where
14 any of the other guests were during the dive?

15 MS. CULLEN: During the initial dive, I know
16 that Mike Mitchell was in, we were kind of two deep
17 to the, well, you had a doorway in the middle.

18 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

19 MS. CULLEN: And you had two screens right
20 in front of that doorway and that was where the
21 Captain stood.

22 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

23 MS. CULLEN: And behind him were the two
24 periscopes.

1 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

2 MS. CULLEN: And then behind that were the
3 navigational tables--

4 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

5 MS. CULLEN: Now, over to the right, there
6 were a whole bunch of screens and monitors. We
7 never knew exactly what those did.

8 MR. TYRRELL: Yes.

9 MS. CULLEN: The sonar was in a room,
10 forward of that.

11 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

12 MS. CULLEN: Now, the controls (inaudible)
13 make the boat go up and down and sideways (inaudible)
14 were over to the left.

15 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

16 MS. CULLEN: In, in front of the Captain.

17 MR. TYRRELL: All right.

18 MS. CULLEN: And there were two seats that
19 were together and there was one behind that. And
20 Mike Mitchell was in that far left seat.

21 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

22 MS. CULLEN: I don't know who, to the best
23 of my knowledge, there was an officer in that back
24 seat.

1 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

2 MS. CULLEN: And then I don't know who was
3 in that front seat. It may have been a crew member,
4 because I don't remember -- I don't remember there
5 being a person in our party.

6 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Do you remember any
7 other guests in an operational position for the
8 initial dive, other than yourself and Mr. Mitchell?

9 MS. CULLEN: Not that I can recall.

10 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

11 MS. CULLEN: What was kind of interesting is
12 the navigation, you know, was in a (inaudible) that
13 it was still done manually. They did not, they
14 didn't do it on the computer. And so, and
15 everything, I mean, I was, you know, (inaudible)
16 that the Navy at times, they would switch equipment
17 around from submarine to submarine. You know, I
18 kind of (inaudible) that, you know, they would move
19 equipment from one sub to the other. And they said
20 it was due to budget cuts (inaudible) and
21 everything, you know, I was surprised (inaudible)
22 and they spoke of what they did.

23 MR. TYRRELL: Yes.

24 MS. CULLEN: (Inaudible)

1 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. So, after the
2 submarine submerged, do you remember what happened
3 next?

4 MS. CULLEN: I think we continued with the
5 tour, seeing different things, walking around, you
6 know, going back down to the crews mess, talking
7 with the different crew members. Just trying to
8 kind of really understand what it was, I mean, you
9 know, I don't think any of us had a notion of, where
10 we would on the boat, what to expect. The closest
11 of the quarters, the way the submarine would
12 actually -- And they answered, I mean, they were
13 polite and very knowledgeable and very respectful in
14 answering everything, to try give us a comprehensive
15 of what was going on, what their jobs were. And to
16 the best of their knowledge.

17 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

18 MS. CULLEN: We happened to be the second
19 seating group. The time lines are a little hazy.

20 But, I know that, I think the first group ate
21 anywhere from quarter to 12 but, I know that they
22 were running late because I can't remember, I guess
23 it is the XO, Carroll, he was with us in our group
24 as well as the Head Engineer(inaudible). And we were

1 on the bridge that morning and or in the control
2 room, sorry, and we, they kept, you know, the
3 Captain was in with the first group and (inaudible)
4 we are hungry up here. And so, I think it was
5 probably 12:30 before the second group ate. So,
6 (inaudible) the crew, the cook, and (inaudible)
7 talking to me on the way, the way to the table, was
8 (inaudible)

9 MR. TYRRELL: After, after lunch --

10 MS. CULLEN: After lunch, we finished pretty
11 quickly. And I think the other group, I can't say
12 what they were doing, I am sure they were doing
13 somewhat what we were doing, but we had time, you
14 know, the beginning part of the tour, we had gone
15 down to the torpedo room, but they just showed us,
16 you know, kind of how the torpedo room worked, how
17 things moved, you know, they didn't move anything,
18 but said this is kind of how all this goes. We went
19 down the second time, they actually opened up a
20 torpedo tube.

21 MR. TYRRELL: I see.

22 MS. CULLEN: And all I can remember was, we
23 had just ate lunch. So, they took, asked for
24 volunteers on the, they wanted (inaudible) and they

1 told us about guests that they have had on the boat.

2 That were very engaging questions. And they kind
3 of shared those experiences with us, I guess,
4 (inaudible) on submarines. And then we were asked
5 if we wanted to, well, I guess it is kind of like
6 sending out a torpedo, but it is, we used water in
7 the torpedo tubes.

8 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

9 MS. CULLEN: A cycle of water. And so, you
10 know, it would fill it up and then they had
11 (inaudible) and we got back (inaudible) flip the
12 switch and we could hear it go, and actually the
13 other group may have done that during our lunch
14 period, because we could hear the noise. So, from
15 there we went back up to the (inaudible) room.

16 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

17 MS. CULLEN: And at that point, we began
18 doing the maneuvers.

19 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. What kind of maneuver
20 was, were you doing?

21 MS. CULLEN: We were doing turns, and you
22 know, we would go down to, I think at one point, I
23 think it was (inaudible) sonar, I am not exactly
24 sure of, we kept, all we knew is we were doing

1 maneuvers. (Inaudible) made sure, you know, put
2 (inaudible) in a position, I was back at the
3 periscope (inaudible) to make sure that the person
4 was (inaudible) sure where they were.

5 MR. TYRRELL: Is this the Captain you are
6 talking about?

7 MS. CULLEN: The Captain. And at that time
8 the XO was, he was in-between the navigational
9 panel, (inaudible) was on the left side of the
10 navigational, the Captain came back in at that,
11 where the Captain, after we saw the torpedo room, we
12 all came back up to the control room, the Captain
13 was not there. We all kind of got in position, the
14 guys were (inaudible) and then the Captain came in
15 and he had, the Captain's jacket, with all the
16 patches (inaudible). And that is when he wanted to
17 make sure everybody was in the position, and so they
18 weren't going to fall or slip or you know, and
19 (inaudible). It is protocol, procedures, that he
20 was yelling or not yelling, (inaudible). I don't
21 know what they meant.

22 MR. TYRRELL: Yes.

23 MS. CULLEN: But, when he told us to stand
24 and hold, you know, (inaudible) he made it very

1 clear to us what we were to be doing. And --

2 MR. TYRRELL: And during these maneuvers,
3 was it the Navy personnel at the controls?

4 MS. CULLEN: I believe so, yes.

5 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

6 MS. CULLEN: Yes, when we were doing turns,
7 like a 30 degree turn, because he was, you know,
8 there were things that he was doing, he was, he was
9 giving them commands, and having been the first time
10 on a submarine, I mean, I wouldn't have known what
11 those commands were. I mean, and nobody said a
12 peek.

13 MR. TYRRELL: So it was quiet in the control
14 room, other than the --

15 MS. CULLEN: It was quiet.

16 MR. TYRRELL: -- Other than the Captain.

17 MS. CULLEN: Correct and his crew.

18 MR. TYRRELL: And his crew.

19 MS. CULLEN: The crew, because his crew had
20 to answer him back in whatever protocol, I mean.

21 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

22 MS. CULLEN: You know, whatever their
23 procedures were. You know, at one point he went to
24 the sonar room and then he came back. I think at

1 one point he had trouble with the computer screen.
2 They were down. And he had to (inaudible) bring the
3 screen back up.

4 MR. TYRRELL: I see, okay. Were the
5 visitors, was the whole big group in there at that
6 time?

7 MS. CULLEN: Yes, everybody, he had given us
8 the offer to go the crews mess to take pictures or
9 to stay with him.

10 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

11 MS. CULLEN: Everybody elected to stay with
12 him.

13 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Were the visitors
14 remaining stationary in one, in the location they
15 were placed or were they moving around at all?

16 MS. CULLEN: Nobody moved because there
17 wasn't, you know, we were doing, when we were doing,
18 we would dive, we would turn, and (inaudible) the
19 degree of the turns were progressive, sort started
20 out at a 10 degree turn, 50 degree turn going up to
21 a 30 degree turn. How many times it went, I don't
22 know. But, from the walk in group, and they were
23 giving commands, you know, and there was just wasn't
24 that many places to hold on. I mean, you couldn't,

1 you couldn't move from place to place.

2 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

3 MS. CULLEN: I mean, you feet would kind of
4 slide, you know, (inaudible)

5 MR. TYRRELL: Pretty severe.

6 MS. CULLEN: Yes.

7 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

8 MS. CULLEN: He also at times, he was timing
9 the crew, he was, you know, he was telling us what
10 he expected of the crew, that he expected them to
11 stay within, you know, a 10 degree, you know,
12 maneuver on and because I was in-between the
13 periscope and back, I couldn't exactly see where
14 levels were. I also couldn't see, there was a
15 screen for me to look at that had the pitch, the
16 roll, and the depth. It was over the navigational
17 table. And my personal interest was in where we
18 were charting, you know, I was curious, I didn't
19 realize the depth dropped so quickly, so close to
20 (inaudible)

21 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

22 MS. CULLEN: And I was fascinated that they
23 still did the navigation by hand. So, I kind of, I
24 watched him, what those guys were doing, because I

1 couldn't see (inaudible) You know, I only watched
2 for the degree, the pitch (inaudible)

3 MR. TYRRELL: I see. Okay. Now, was the
4 next, can you take me through what happened up to
5 the time that they started the emergency blow?

6 MS. CULLEN: He, he, you know, I mean,
7 being, you know, a novice, I don't know what the
8 procedures were.

9 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

10 MS. CULLEN: What I do remember is
11 apparently they, you know, and I don't know how far
12 down the line getting ready for the emergency blow,
13 what they do, but I remember (inaudible) sound some
14 kind of whistle, blow some kind of thing. John Hall
15 was asked to do the, two little gauges, I guess that
16 pump the water out of the ballast. You know, at
17 that point, I mean, because I was still standing in-
18 between the periscope, which I guess had this
19 (inaudible) she was not at the periscope. Cohen was
20 on (inaudible) in the crew. We also came a
21 periscope level. I don't know if it was, if that
22 all preceded, I mean, I just remember the periscope,
23 it turned four, three times, I don't know how many
24 times it turned, because we were looking at what

1 looked like a little six inch television. And I
2 remember seeing, I guess, we did a 360 because I
3 guess you would see the markings where the con tower
4 was.

5 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

6 MS. CULLEN: It would be like a flash
7 (inaudible) screen. And you know, we saw that a
8 couple of times.

9 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

10 MS. CULLEN: From Cohen. I remember the
11 Captain going in the sonar room, coming back, and
12 taking down the (inaudible) and (inaudible) and you
13 know, he did at least rotation, if not two.

14 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

15 MS. CULLEN: And he stopped at (inaudible)
16 and then you know, put the periscope down, and we
17 did a dive, and I think at that point when we got to
18 down to whatever, 400 feet, he asked John Clary to
19 sit in that control and there were two seats, the
20 right hand seat.

21 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

22 MS. CULLEN: And at first, you know, he said
23 no. And he said, no, I want you to sit on that
24 seat. And he did. And we were, you know, that was

1 (inaudible) We went up, and he told us to
2 (inaudible) out of the water, and what was funny is
3 that (inaudible) I mean, we had all seen, you know,
4 what it is suppose, the submarine from the outside,
5 when you are --

6 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

7 MS. CULLEN: And that wasn't anticipated, it
8 was not the kind of thing that you see from the
9 inside. It is almost (inaudible) or anticlimaxes.
10 And then all of a sudden, it started down like an
11 airplane, and (inaudible) click. And it sounded
12 like, I mean, at that point, the Captain said, "What
13 the hell was that?" And Harris, who was in that
14 left seat or he was left of the left seat, looking
15 at the monitors, which I don't know (inaudible),
16 turned around and --

17 (Tape ended.)

18 MR. TYRRELL: Kind of a ripping, ripping
19 sound.

20 MS. CULLEN: Not really a ripping, you know,
21 I mean, it was like a great big sheet of metal,
22 pulled back, that is kind of what it was.

23 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. And you were all
24 concerned that something had happened to the boat.

1 MS. CULLEN: Well, we --

2 MR. TYRRELL: Is that it?

3 MS. CULLEN: Right. Yeah.

4 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

5 MS. CULLEN: Well, we didn't, and, and then
6 we kind of all, I mean, it was just, nobody
7 breathed, and everybody (inaudible) you know, oh,
8 that is what we always do or I mean, you know,
9 because we just, it was a, I mean, it was just, I
10 don't know. I mean, the Captain was so
11 conscientious and so worried about our well being
12 that day. I mean, he talked about how, what a lucky
13 man he was, you know, how lucky he was, you know, by
14 God. He said, you know, how wonderful, he had a
15 great crew.

16 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

17 MS. CULLEN: And I mean, the whole day, I
18 mean, even during lunch, the XO (inaudible) sat at
19 the table and said, you know, we have worked with a
20 lot of crews and this was a great crew. He is a
21 wonderful man, and because they had all been through
22 different, you know, crews.

23 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

24 MS. CULLEN: And you know, all of sudden,

1 (inaudible) were sitting there going, you know, and
2 we don't know anything.

3 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

4 MS. CULLEN: So --

5 MR. TYRRELL: What happened after you heard
6 this loud sign and the Captain said, "what the hell
7 was that?"

8 MS. CULLEN: We surfaced. I mean, he was
9 like "take it up, and pull up the periscope", he was
10 barking out orders. And at that point he said, he
11 yelled to one of the crew members, to take my guests
12 to the crews mess.

13 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

14 MS. CULLEN: And at that point, we got down
15 to the crews mess, I mean, we just, we realized that
16 this wasn't on their schedule. And something was
17 wrong.

18 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

19 MS. CULLEN: And all of a sudden, you know,
20 on the screen we saw the boat.

21 MR. TYRRELL: In a video display?

22 MS. CULLEN: On a flat screen.

23 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. What did, what did it
24 look like?

1 MS. CULLEN: At first, I mean, I thought it
2 was a cutter boat, because it had the wide back.
3 And then it was, I mean, at that point we still
4 didn't know, I mean, the waves were going, and so,
5 you are getting, you couldn't tell if it was sinking
6 fast, I mean, and at that point the Captain
7 (inaudible), I mean, (inaudible) on the submarine,
8 it wouldn't have been what you would have thought if
9 we had hit something. It would, the (inaudible)
10 didn't match, what had happened. And at that point,
11 you know, telling us procedure, blah, blah. And
12 please do this. (inaudible) they got the wardroom
13 ready for medivacs and they were going to move us
14 down (inaudible) the torpedo room, and so that they
15 could bring any survivors onboard. Because this is
16 all part of the procedures and you know, they, I
17 mean, they had secured their boat and now they were,
18 you know, ready to help with the rescue operation. I
19 mean, and that was, that was within five minutes.

20 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. When, could you tell
21 by looking in the screen that, that the boat that
22 was struck was actually sinking or not?

23 MS. CULLEN: It took, it took probably a
24 couple of minutes and at that point the Captain, the

1 Captain said, you know, the vessel is (inaudible) I
2 mean, I remember sitting in the crews mess and
3 realized that that other boat was sinking.

4 MR. TYRRELL: But, the realization that it
5 was sinking, was it from looking at the picture or
6 from what you heard the Captain say over the
7 intercom?

8 MS. CULLEN: It was probably both. I don't
9 know if, I mean, the seas were so rough, that the
10 boat was going up, and of course, we were going up
11 and down once we surfaced.

12 MR. TYRRELL: Right. Okay.

13 Where did you go from, they moved you out
14 of the, out of the mess.

15 MS. CULLEN: And we went down to the torpedo
16 room.

17 MR. TYRRELL: To the torpedo room. Okay.
18 And what did you do there?

19 MS. CULLEN: We prayed. And we just, you
20 know, at that point, we wanted to do whatever we
21 could possibly do. You know, during the course of
22 the day, we were told (inaudible) the boat,
23 (inaudible) and there were some of the seven
24 (inaudible) crews on that boat that day. So, they

1 were operating, you know, with half their crew. At
2 that point, we wanted to stay out of their way and
3 help them, if there was anything we could do to help
4 them. So, we stayed kind in that one little corner
5 of the room. (Inaudible) emergency equipment,
6 divers, you know, they were going through
7 procedures, and it was (inaudible) what was going on
8 as far as (inaudible) they were doing their jobs.
9 And we, I still remember we knew over, at one point
10 they asked if anyone on the boat spoke Chinese,
11 because they were having trouble (inaudible). And
12 they said they had called the Coast Guard, they also
13 gave the ETA of the helicopters (inaudible). And I
14 just remember for a helicopter (inaudible) it was
15 over, over 20 minutes from the time that (inaudible)
16 on site. But, the helicopter got there (inaudible)
17 the boat.

18 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. The Coast Guard boat.

19 MS. CULLEN: The Coast Guard boat.

20 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. All right. How long
21 did you stay in the torpedo room?

22 MS. CULLEN: We were there, I think, at
23 least 30 to 45 minutes to an hour.

24 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Did you have a video

1 display to watch?

2 MS. CULLEN: Yes, there is the torpedo room,
3 there is (inaudible)

4 MR. TYRRELL: Oh, okay.

5 MS. CULLEN: To watch.

6 MR. TYRRELL: Did you have anything to seat
7 on?

8 MS. CULLEN: There were, there is some, I
9 guess, torpedo room boxes, that literally had been
10 eight inches or, there was, I mean, I sat on the, I
11 sat on the (inaudible)

12 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

13 MS. CULLEN: But, (inaudible), you know,
14 Harris came down and he would give us updates on,
15 you know, (inaudible) helicopter arrived, but other
16 than that, we just stay out here. At that point we
17 still didn't know the degree or the magnitude of
18 what, you know, what had happened. We knew, I mean,
19 we knew that we hit a boat and that they were in
20 rescue operations, but we didn't know what was
21 happening after that.

22 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

23 MS. CULLEN: When he came down, any
24 questions we had, he --

1 MR. TYRRELL: Who is this?

2 MS. CULLEN: Harris.

3 MR. TYRRELL: Harris is who?

4 MS. CULLEN: He was the gentleman that was
5 sitting in the far left.

6 MR. TYRRELL: Oh, okay. Okay. So, he
7 wasn't with the rest of the group in the torpedo
8 room?

9 MS. CULLEN: He came down after, you know,
10 done whatever, I guess he needed to do. He came
11 down.

12 MR. TYRRELL: But, he was one of the guests
13 as well?

14 MS. CULLEN: No. He was a crew member.

15 MR. TYRRELL: Oh, oh, okay. And Harris,
16 that is his last name? Okay. He was wearing a
17 name tag, I take it.

18 MS. CULLEN: Yes, he had on, on all their
19 uniforms, they had their names on it. I guess the
20 lower ranks were in white, and the officers or
21 higher ranks were in yellow.

22 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. So, where did you go
23 after you left the torpedo, when did you leave the
24 torpedo room and where did they take you?

1 MS. CULLEN: I think when they realized that
2 they could not take on survivors, that it was too
3 rough, and the Captain kept making updates, he had
4 to update his crew and you know, at that point, I
5 guess we were just, we were hearing what was going
6 on throughout the (inaudible). I think when they
7 realized that they couldn't take on the survivors,
8 they took us back up to the crews mess.

9 MR. TYRRELL: Did he make an announcement to
10 the effect that they could not take on survivors
11 because of it was too rough?

12 MS. CULLEN: Yes.

13 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

14 MS. CULLEN: Yes. I mean, that was his,
15 his first concern was for his crew, to get, you
16 know, to make sure that the boat was, you know,
17 safe.

18 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

19 MS. CULLEN: That, you know, it wasn't going
20 to take on water or you know, (inaudible), you know,
21 I mean, but, it was probably not even, immediately,
22 he went in to survivors and you know, getting his
23 boat ready to help them.

24 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

1 MS. CULLEN: It was, you know, it was almost
2 simultaneously.

3 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

4 MS. CULLEN: The divers still stayed ready,
5 because he was, you know, you never know if the seas
6 were going to change and that the divers would be
7 able to go.

8 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

9 MS. CULLEN: But, they, you know, it was an
10 hour later and they moved us back up to the crews
11 mess and they realized, you know, and I think
12 (inaudible), the boat, the Coast Guard boat was
13 coming and the helicopter was on the (inaudible),
14 that, you know, they could move us back to the crews
15 mess, because the survivors were not going to be
16 coming onboard with us.

17 MR. TYRRELL: I see. Okay. I understand
18 that you all remained onboard the submarine
19 overnight.

20 MS. CULLEN: Yes. The Captain (inaudible)
21 and kind of talked with us, they knew that we were
22 upset, and I am sure that they were also, and he
23 tried to answer any questions that we had. So, we
24 were told that we were still going to be out there

1 to help with the search and rescue operations. It
2 was six o'clock when they told us that, I guess it
3 was the (inaudible) determination that they, they
4 had made another, they were setting up dinner for
5 the crews mess, for the crew and that the Captain
6 (inaudible) and asked to stay out and help with the
7 search and rescue overnight. And they apologized,
8 and at that point the Captain, there was a logistic
9 problem because there were women onboard and where
10 to have us sleep. The bathroom was (inaudible).

11 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

12 MS. CULLEN: So, I guess, we were asking
13 first (inaudible) all of us felt horrible, because
14 the crew, I mean, they had been through this
15 experience, (inaudible) and we ate and we were asked
16 to go the wardroom, and that is kind of where they
17 turned the wardroom over to us.

18 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Did anything, anything
19 that that you would consider significant happen from
20 that point on until the time that took you back into
21 Pearl Harbor?

22 MS. CULLEN: Anything significant?

23 MR. TYRRELL: In regards to the search and
24 rescue or any announcements that stick in your mind

1 that are related to the condition of the submarine
2 or the, or the efforts to locate survivors?

3 MS. CULLEN: I mean, it was probably every
4 20 minutes we were turning, because, you know, all
5 night long, I think everybody, we were just all
6 shocked, I mean, at that point, the realization that
7 we weren't going back to shore and that they were
8 asking, you know, for a contact offshore, because
9 they (inaudible) we probably at that point became a
10 liability to them because they were having to do, do
11 more than they would have normally done, you know,
12 for us.

13 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

14 MS. CULLEN: And so, at that point we
15 probably (inaudible). The Captain was, his
16 integrity and responsibilities were impeccable, were
17 beyond reproach. He gave us updates. (Inaudible) I
18 am not, this was our first time that I can't even
19 imagine there being a (inaudible) going beyond what
20 was necessary to make sure that we (inaudible)

21 MR. TYRRELL: What kind of updates would he
22 give you during the evening?

23 MS. CULLEN: Personally, he took messages
24 from contact, you know, who we wanted to contact and

1 what specifically we wanted said. You know, the
2 fact that, I mean, he had command of such a large
3 ship, and crew members, I mean, you know, there were
4 crew members that were suppose to pick up their
5 children at three o'clock, you know, I mean, they,
6 you know, and here he is taking personal time,
7 personally, you know, getting telephone numbers,
8 messages to our loved ones. You know, and he would
9 come in and there were updates, he said, (inaudible)
10 and tell us, you know, what was going on to the best
11 of his knowledge.

12 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. All right. So, about
13 what time was it that you returned to Pearl Harbor?

14 MS. CULLEN: We were told the night before
15 that we would have like a nine o'clock (inaudible).
16 Embark on a, at that point, at one point go back out
17 (inaudible). That morning, I don't know what time
18 we woke up, it was early. It was, it came over the
19 speaker it was time to get up.

20 MR. TYRRELL: I see.

21 MS. CULLEN: And whether that was for the
22 crew or the guests, I don't -- We ended up not
23 getting back into port until 9:30.

24 MR. TYRRELL: I see.

1 MS. CULLEN: And so from there I don't know
2 what the time line was. It didn't matter to us. We
3 had to go from there to the boat, to the boat
4 (inaudible) and I think we kind of figured we were
5 going to get back around 11.

6 MR. TYRRELL: Could you tell me what the
7 debriefing was all about?

8 MS. CULLEN: We were asked to go into a
9 room, kind of a (inaudible). There were probably,
10 it was six officers. They introduced everybody.
11 (Inaudible) Admiral Konetzni came in, and
12 (inaudible), he apologized, and at that point he
13 broke down. I guess we realized that we have lost
14 (inaudible) He talked about what a fine commander
15 the Captain (inaudible). And he went through the,
16 you know, you are free to talk, you know, we are not
17 going to release your names, you know, that is up to
18 you all. And we are going to be in our
19 investigation (inaudible). And we will let you know
20 that National Transportation Safety Board and
21 possibly other people will be contacting us.

22 MR. TYRRELL: Well, they made it a little
23 bit difficult for us, because they wouldn't give us
24 the names. And when they gave us the names, they

1 didn't give us the telephone numbers.

2 MS. CULLEN: Oh. You know, I don't, I mean,
3 we realized, we didn't know what to do.

4 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

5 MS. CULLEN: I mean, you know, I think it
6 was reported, we had the night before, I mean, you
7 know, and we knew at that point it was the Japanese,
8 and my first instinct, question from another one in
9 our group, was this is going to be an international
10 incident. And they said, oh, no, no, it is not a
11 big deal. It won't be. And you know, also we are
12 going to debriefing and they gave us cards and
13 people who we could contact with the Navy. You
14 know, and then you kind of watch (inaudible) I mean,
15 beyond your wildest dream.

16 MR. TYRRELL: Yes.

17 MS. CULLEN: And we probably were still in
18 shock.

19 MR. TYRRELL: There is one other area that I
20 have to ask you about.

21 MS. CULLEN: Yes.

22 MR. TYRRELL: We received a report that the
23 guests were served alcohol while onboard the
24 submarine, can you --

1 MS. CULLEN: No.

2 MR. TYRRELL: That is not true?

3 MS. CULLEN: That is not true.

4 MR. TYRRELL: Okay.

5 MS. CULLEN: There was, I mean, and because
6 it was funny because that, I mean, we were in the
7 ward room, we were, I mean, we would go through, I
8 guess, trying to make sense of everything and the
9 crew member would ask, I mean, (inaudible) would,
10 kind of (inaudible) and you know, is there anything
11 else I can get you, and you know, and a couple of
12 people in the group would go, you know, a bottle of
13 Scotch would be great. And he was laughing, and in
14 fact, I think it was XO during lunch had told us
15 that how rare it was that alcohol was ever on the
16 boat. That in any times he had ever been in, on a
17 boat, that there was only one (inaudible) alcohol
18 had been cleared for the boat. I mean, that was
19 over in Australia. That they were, I guess he was
20 over during, I don't know who, I don't know when it
21 was, if it was, but he said, you know, and I want to
22 say that it was around the time that of the
23 Olympics. Now, I don't know if the boat was over
24 there, I don't, you know, but it was something, we

1 just realized, I mean, these guys, you know, some of
2 them had been, Techmar had been on Trident, you
3 know, (inaudible) that it was just, it was
4 absolutely (inaudible).

5 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. None of the guests
6 brought any alcohol with them onboard?

7 MS. CULLEN: No. I mean, we got up a 5:30
8 in the morning, I mean, you know, if --

9 MR. TYRRELL: No, I haven't --

10 MS. CULLEN: The only thing we had was
11 coffee from McDonalds.

12 MR. TYRRELL: I have to ask these questions.

13 MS. CULLEN: No offense. I mean, that is
14 why, I mean, we just, what was funny is that if I
15 had ever known that we would have the knowledge of
16 how it was the workings of a submarine, and that, I
17 mean, this, I mean, I have always respected the
18 Armed Services, but I mean, now, I can't even tell
19 you how high integrity, professionalism of these
20 crew members, you know, and I am sure it not just
21 this boat. I am sure it is, you know, but, it is
22 beyond anything I was, ever thought.

23 MR. TYRRELL: Is there anything else that
24 you haven't told me that you think I should know

1 about?

2 MS. CULLEN: No, I mean, you know, for us, I
3 mean, we are trying, I mean, this is, I don't
4 understand how it happened. It doesn't, I mean, I
5 know we don't know (inaudible) it is like trying to
6 look at football the first time, we don't really
7 have a clue of what is going on.

8 MR. TYRRELL: Right.

9 MS. CULLEN: But, you know what you saw, I
10 can't explain it, because it doesn't, because I
11 don't have a, I don't understand how that could
12 happen.

13 MR. TYRRELL: Okay. Well, I really
14 appreciate you taking your time, taking time out of
15 your day to talk to me, to help me, tell me about
16 your experience. If you think of anything later, by
17 all means please give me a call and --

18 MS. CULLEN: Okay.

19 MR. TYRRELL: -- and let me know what it
20 is. I would be very interested in hearing it.

21 MS. CULLEN: Okay.

22 MR. TYRRELL: All right.

23 MS. CULLEN: All right.

24 MR. TYRRELL: Well, thank you once again.

1 MS. CULLEN: Okay.
2 MR. TYRRELL: Right.
3 MS. CULLEN: Bye, bye.
4 MR. TYRRELL: Bye, bye.
5 (Tape ended.)